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Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees: The West's Response to Jewish Emigration

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Overview

Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees: The West's Response to Jewish Emigration

The Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR) was organized in London in August 1938 as a result of the Evian Conference of July 1938, which had been called by President Roosevelt to consider the problem of racial, religious, and political refugees from central Europe.

The Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR) was organized in London in August 1938 as a result of the Evian Conference of July 1938. The Evian Conference was called by President Franklin Roosevelt outside the formal framework of the League of Nations "for the primary purpose of facilitating involuntary emigration from Germany (including Austria)" of "persons who have not already left their country of origin (Germany, including Austria), but who must emigrate on account of their political opinions, religious beliefs or racial origin, and persons who have already left their country of origin and who have not yet established themselves permanently elsewhere."

For the first time, there was discussion on extending protection to would-be refugees inside the country of potential departure, particularly central Europe. The IGCR, however, received little authority and almost no funds or support from its member nations for resettlement of refugees from Europe in countries allowing permanent immigration, and it had little success in opening countries to refugees.

The first director of the IGCR was George Rublee, an American lawyer, who opened negotiations with Hjalmar Schacht, the President of the German Central Bank in December 1938. After Schacht was removed from his post, the negotiations went on with Helmut Wohltat of the Ministry of Economy. As a result of the negotiations they called for the creation of a fund, to be guaranteed by the Jewish property in Germany, and a Coordinating Foundation in order to finance the emigration of 400,000 Jews from Germany. The attempts of the IGCR to find havens for German Jews in different countries largely failed.

At the Anglo-American conference at Bermuda in April 1943, recommendations were made to the Committee and adopted in August 1943 for an extension of its mandate and structure in order to take into account not only immediately urgent situations but also the longer-term problems of the postwar period. After the establishment of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration the Committee's responsibilities were limited to refugees in areas in which that Administration was not active and to refugees who for one reason or another did not come within the jurisdiction of the Administration, such as stateless refugees.

In July 1944, 37 governments participated in the work of the Committee. Of these, representatives of nine countries, including the United States, served on its Executive Committee. The primary responsibility for determining the policy of the United States with regard to the Committee was that of the Department of State. It ceased to exist in 1947, and its functions and records were transferred to the International Refugee Organization of the United Nations.

Publisher's Note: This collection comprises, in its entirety, the Primary Source Media microfilm collection entitled *Records of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, 1938-1947.*

Collection Facts

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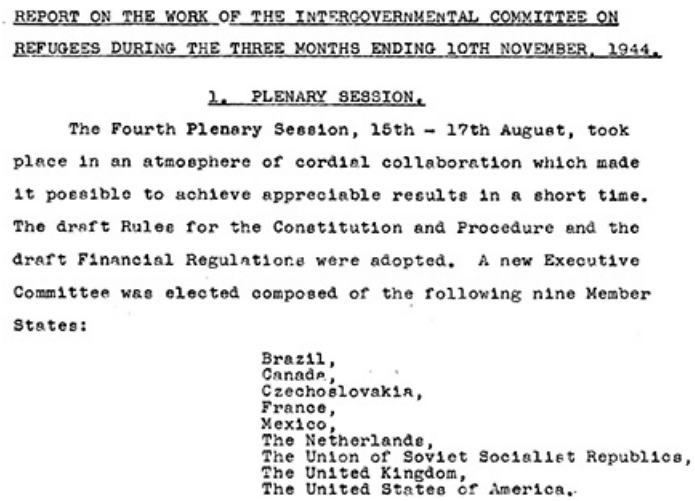

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES DURING THE THREE MONTHS ENDING 10TH NOVEMBER, 1944.

1. PLENARY SESSION.

The Fourth Plenary Session, 15th - 17th August, took place in an atmosphere of cordial collaboration which made it possible to achieve appreciable results in a short time. The draft Rules for the Constitution and Procedure and the draft Financial Regulations were adopted. A new Executive Committee was elected composed of the following nine Member States:

Brazil,
Canada,
Czechoslovakia,
France,
Mexico,
The Netherlands,
The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,
The United Kingdom,
The United States of America.

Intergovernmental Committee report for the three months ending on November 10, 1944

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Shibboleth AuthEnabled	false
Shibboleth GUID	false

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